

UNITED CHURCH

"FOR CHRIST AND



THE CHURCH."

Model Constitution — and By-Laws

OF THE

YOUNG PEOPLE'S

SOCIETY OF

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR

● REVISED ●



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THE MODEL CONSTITUTION.

THIS Constitution, which, in its important features, is substantially the same as that adopted by the first society in Portland, Feb. 2, 1881, has been prepared with great care, and met with the very hearty indorsement of the Fourth National Conference, to which it was presented. It has been revised and approved by the Trustees of the United Society, at a meeting held October, 1887.

It is not necessarily binding upon any local society, but is to be regarded in the light of a recommendation; especially for the guidance of new organizations and those unacquainted with the work of the Society of Christian Endeavor. It is hoped, however, that for the sake of uniformity, that the Constitution, which deals only with main principles, may be generally adopted, and that such changes as may be needed to adapt the society to local needs will be made in the By-Laws. Even if the language of the Constitution of some local societies should vary from this Model Constitution, it should be borne in mind that only those societies that adhere to the *prayer-meeting idea* as embodied in Article VII., and the main features of committee work, can properly claim the name of Christian Endeavor societies. The specimen By-laws which are here appended embrace suggestions for the government of the society, which have been found successful in many places. Each one is approved by experience.

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THE MODEL CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.—NAME.

This society shall be called the _____
YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY OF CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

ARTICLE II.—OBJECT.

Its object shall be to promote an earnest Christian life among its members, to increase their mutual acquaintance, and to make them more useful in the service of God.

ARTICLE III.—MEMBERSHIP.

1. The members shall consist of three classes : active, associate, and affiliated or honorary.

2. ACTIVE MEMBERS.—The active members of this society shall consist of all young persons who believe themselves to be Christians, and who sincerely desire to accomplish the objects above specified. Voting powers shall be vested only in the active members.

3. ASSOCIATE MEMBERS.—All young persons of worthy character, who are not at present willing to be considered decided Christians, may become associate members of this society. They shall have the special prayers and sympathy of the active members, but shall be excused from taking part in the prayer meeting. It is expected that all associate members will habitually attend the prayer meetings, and that they will in time become active members, and the society will work to this end.

4. **AFFILIATED OR HONORARY MEMBERS.***—All persons who, though no longer young, are still interested in the society, and wish to have some connection with it, though they cannot regularly attend the meetings, may become affiliated members. Their names shall be kept upon the list under the appropriate heading, but shall not be called at the roll-call meeting. It is understood that the society may look to the affiliated members for financial and moral support in all worthy efforts. (For special class of honorary members, see Article IX.)

5. These different persons shall become members, upon being elected by the society, after carefully examining the Constitution, and upon signing their names to it, thereby pledging themselves to live up to its requirements.

ARTICLE IV.—OFFICERS.

1. The officers of this society shall be a President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, and Treasurer, who shall be chosen from among the active members of the society.

2. There shall also be a Lookout Committee, a Prayer Meeting Committee, a Social Committee, and such other committees as the local needs of each society may require, each consisting of five active members. There shall also be an Executive Committee, as provided in Article VI.

*This class of membership is provided for Christians of mature years, especially for those who have been active members, and who desire to remain throughout their lives connected with the society. Young persons who can be either active or associate members should in no case be affiliated members.

ARTICLE V.—DUTIES OF OFFICERS.

1. **PRESIDENT.**—The President of the society shall perform the duties usually pertaining to that office. He shall have especial watch over the interests of the society, and it shall be his care to see that the different committees perform the duties devolving upon them.

2. **VICE-PRESIDENT.**—The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President, in his absence.

3. **CORRESPONDING SECRETARY.**—It shall be the duty of the Corresponding Secretary to keep the local society in communication with the United Society, and with other local societies, and to present to his own society such matters of interest as may come from the United Society, from other local societies, and from other authorized sources of Christian Endeavor. This office shall be permanent, and the name shall be forwarded to the United Society.

4. **RECORDING SECRETARY.**—It shall be the duty of the Recording Secretary to keep a record of the members, and to correct it from time to time, as may be necessary, and to obtain the signature of each newly elected member to the Constitution; also to correspond with absent members, and inform them of their standing in the society; also to keep correct minutes of all business meetings of the society; also to notify all persons elected to office or to committees, and to do so in writing, if necessary.

5. **TREASURER.**—It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to safely keep all moneys belonging to the society, and to pay out only such sums as shall be voted by the society.

ARTICLE VI.—DUTIES OF COMMITTEES.

1. **LOOKOUT COMMITTEE.**—It shall be the duty of this committee to bring new members into the society, to introduce them to the work and to the other members, and to affectionately look after and reclaim any that seem indifferent to their duties, as outlined in the pledge. This committee shall also, by personal investigation, satisfy itself of the fitness of young persons to become members of this society, and shall propose their names at least one week before their election to membership.

2. **PRAYER MEETING COMMITTEE.**—It shall be the duty of this committee to have in charge the prayer meeting, and to see that a topic is assigned and a leader appointed for every meeting, and to do what it can to secure faithfulness to the prayer-meeting pledge.

3. **SOCIAL COMMITTEE.**—It shall be the duty of this committee to promote the social interests of the society by welcoming strangers to the meetings, and by providing for the mutual acquaintance of the members by occasional sociables, for which any appropriate entertainment of which the church approves may be provided.

4. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.***—This committee shall consist of the Pastor of the church, the officers of the society, and the chairmen of the various committees. All matters of business requiring debate shall be brought first before this committee, and by it reported either favorably or

*The object of this committee is to prevent waste of time in the regular meetings of the society by useless debate and unnecessary parliamentary practice, which are always harmful to the spirit of a prayer meeting.

adversely to the society. "All discussion of proposed measures shall take place before this committee, and not before the society." Recommendations concerning the finances of the society shall also originate with this committee.

5. Each committee, except the Executive, shall make a report in writing to the society, at the monthly business meetings, concerning the work of the past month.

ARTICLE VII.—THE PRAYER MEETING.

1. *All the active members shall be present at every meeting, unless detained by some absolute necessity, and each active member shall take some part, however slight, in every meeting. To the above all the active members shall pledge* themselves, understanding by "absolute necessity" some reason for absence which can conscientiously be given to their Master, Jesus Christ. The meeting shall be held one hour, and at the close some time may be taken for introduction and social intercourse, if desired.*

2. Once each month a consecration or experience meeting shall be held, at which each active member may speak concerning his progress in the Christian life, or renew his vows of consecration. If any one chooses, he can express his feelings by an appropriate verse of Scripture or other quotation.

3. At each consecration or experience meeting the roll shall be called, and the responses of the active members who are present shall be considered as a renewed expression of allegiance to Christ. *It is expected that, if any one is obliged*

*For form of pledge, see By-Laws, Art. V.

to be absent from this meeting, he will send a request to be excused by some one who attends.

4. If any active member of this society is absent from this monthly meeting, and fails to send an excuse, the Lookout Committee is expected to take the name of such an one, and in a kind and brotherly spirit ascertain the reason for the absence. *If any active member of the society is absent and unexcused from three consecutive monthly meetings, such an one ceases to be a member of the society, and his name shall be stricken from the list of members.*

ARTICLE VIII.—BUSINESS MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS.

1. Business meetings may be held at the close of the evening prayer meeting, or at any other time in accordance with the call of the President.

2. An election of the officers and committees shall be held once in six months. Names may be proposed by a Nominating Committee appointed by the President.

ARTICLE IX.—RELATION TO THE CHURCH.

This society being a part of the church, the pastor, deacons, elders or stewards, and Sunday-school superintendent shall be *ex officio* honorary members. Any difficult question may be laid before them for advice.

ARTICLE X.—WITHDRAWALS.

Any member who may wish to withdraw from the society shall state the reasons in writing to the Lookout Committee and pastor, and if these reasons seem sufficient, he may be allowed to withdraw.

ARTICLE XI.—MISCELLANEOUS.

Any other committees may be added and duties assumed by this society, which in the future may seem best.

AMENDMENT.

[The following amendment was proposed by Rev. F. E. Clark, and recommended to the societies by vote of the National Convention held in Chicago, July 5-8, 1888.]

Since it would in the end defeat the very object of our organization if the older active members, who have been trained in the society for usefulness in the church, should remain content with fulfilling their pledge to the society only, therefore it is expected that these older members, when it shall become impossible for them to attend two weekly prayer meetings, shall be transferred to the affiliated membership of the society, if previously faithful to their vows as active members. This transfer, however, shall be made with the understanding that the obligations for faithful service shall still be binding upon them in the regular church prayer meeting. It shall be left to the Lookout Committee, in conjunction with the Pastor, to see that this transfer of membership is made as occasion requires. Special pains shall also be taken to see that a share of the duties and responsibilities, both of the prayer meeting and of the general work of the society, shall be borne by the younger members.

SPECIMEN BY-LAWS GIVEN AS HINTS FOR THE
REGULATION OF LOCAL SOCIETIES.*

BY-LAWS.

ARTICLE I.

This society shall hold a prayer meeting on _____ evening of each week. The last regular prayer meeting of the month shall be a consecration or experience meeting, at which the roll shall be called.

ARTICLE II.

METHOD OF CONDUCTING THE EXPERIENCE OR
CONSECRATION MEETING.

At this meeting the roll may be called by the leader during the meeting, instead of at its close. After the opening exercises, the names of five or more may be called, and then a hymn sung or a prayer offered. Thus varied, with singing and prayer interspersed, the entire roll may be called.

*If it is thought that these rules and regulations are unnecessarily long, it should be borne distinctly in mind that these specimen By-Laws are simply *suggestions*. It is not recommended that they be adopted entire, as in the case of the Model Constitution, for all of them would not be adapted, perhaps, to the need of any one society, but from them all valuable *hints* may be derived for the government of local organizations. The fundamental principles of the society are exceedingly simple, and only so many of these By-Laws need be adopted as seem necessary to the easy working of this plan for Christian nurture. Undue attention to rules and parliamentary law is to be deprecated, and the fundamental fact that the object of this society is *solely for Christian work and growth* should never be lost out of sight.

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ARTICLE III.

This society shall hold its regular business meeting in connection with the first regular prayer meeting in the month. Special business meetings at the call of the President.

ARTICLE IV.

The election of officers and committees shall be held at the first business meeting in.....

.....
A Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the President, of which the Pastor shall be a member *ex officio*. The following clause of the By-Laws may be read to the society before each semi-annual election of officers:

While membership on the board of officers or committees of this society should be distributed as evenly as the best good of the society will warrant, among the different members, the offices should not be considered places of honor to be striven for, but simply opportunities for increased usefulness; and any ill-feeling or jealousy springing from this cause shall be deemed unworthy a member of the Society of Christian Endeavor. When, however, a member has been fairly elected, it is expected that he will consider his office a sacred trust, to be conscientiously accepted, and never to be declined except for most urgent and valid reasons.

ARTICLE V.

Applications for membership may be made on printed forms, which shall be supplied by the Lookout Committee, and returned to them for consideration.

Names may be proposed for membership at the close of the consecration meetings, and shall be voted on by the society at the following business meeting. The Lookout Committee may also, in order to satisfy itself of the Christian character of the candidate, present to all candidates for active membership the following card to be signed:

Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for strength, I promise Him that I will strive to do whatever He would like to have me do; that I will make it the rule of my life to pray and to read the Bible every day, and to support my own church in every way, especially by attending all her regular Sunday and midweek services, unless prevented by some reason which I can conscientiously give to my Saviour; and that, just so far as I know how, throughout my whole life, I will endeavor to lead a Christian life.

As an active member, I promise to be true to all my duties, to be present at, and to take some part, aside from singing, in every Christian Endeavor prayer meeting, unless hindered by some reason which I can conscientiously give to my Lord and Master. If obliged to be absent from the monthly consecration meeting of the society, I will, if possible, send at least a verse of Scripture to be read in response to my name at the roll-call.

Signed,

ARTICLE VI.

Persons who have forfeited their membership may be re-admitted on recommendation of the Lookout Committee and Pastor, and a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular business meeting.

ARTICLE VII.

New members shall sign the Constitution and By-Laws within four weeks from their election, to confirm the vote of the society.

ARTICLE VIII.

Any one who cannot accept the office to which he may be elected shall notify the President in writing before the next business meeting, at which the vacancy shall be filled.

ARTICLE IX.

Membership tickets may be furnished to all members of the society, admitting them to all the socials. The Social Committee may furnish tickets to members for their friends, providing they are suitable persons, admitting them to the socials dated on the ticket.

ARTICLE X.

The Lookout Committee shall read the names of any who may cease to be members, and give the reason why their names should be taken off the list.

ARTICLE XI.

Letters of Introduction to other Christian Endeavor societies shall be given to members *in good standing* who apply to be released from their obligations to the society, this release to take effect when they shall become members of another society; until then, their names shall be kept on the Absent List. Members removing to other places, or desiring to join other Christian Endeavor societies in the same city or town, are requested to obtain Letters of Introduction within six months from the time of their leaving, unless

they shall give satisfactory reasons to the society for their further delay.

ARTICLE XII.

Other committees may be added, according to the needs of local societies, whose duties may be defined as follows :—

SUNDAY-SCHOOL COMMITTEE.—It shall be the duty of this committee to endeavor to bring into the Sunday-school those who do not attend elsewhere, and to co-operate with the superintendent and officers of the school in any ways which they may suggest for the benefit of the Sunday-school.

THE CALLING COMMITTEE.—It shall be the duty of this committee to have a special care for those among the young people who do not feel at home in the church, to call on them, and to remind others where calls should be made.

MUSIC COMMITTEE.—It shall be the duty of this committee to provide for the singing at the young people's meeting, and also to turn the musical ability of the society into account, when necessary, at public religious meetings.

MISSIONARY COMMITTEE.—It shall be the duty of this committee to provide for occasional missionary meetings, to interest the members of the society in all ways in missionary topics, and to aid in any manner which may seem practicable the cause of home and foreign missions.

THE FLOWER COMMITTEE.—It shall be the duty of this committee to provide flowers for the pulpit and to distribute them to the sick at the close of the Sabbath services.

TEMPERANCE COMMITTEE.—It shall be the duty of this committee to do what may be deemed

best to promote temperance principles and sentiment among the members of the society.

RELIEF COMMITTEE.—It shall be the duty of this committee to do what it can to cheer and aid, if possible and necessary by material comforts, the sick and destitute among the young people of the church and Sunday-school.

GOOD LITERATURE COMMITTEE.—It shall be the duty of this committee to do its utmost to promote the reading of good books and papers. To this end it shall do what it can to circulate the religious newspaper representing the society among its members, also to obtain subscribers for the denominational papers or magazines among the families of the congregation, as the pastor and the church may direct. It may, if deemed best, distribute tracts and religious leaflets, and in any other suitable way which may be desired introduce good reading matter wherever practicable.

ARTICLE XIII.

Members who cannot meet with the society for a time are requested to obtain leave of absence, which shall be granted by the society, on recommendation of the Lookout Committee and Pastor, and their names shall be placed on the Absent List.

ARTICLE XIV.

—members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE XV.

These By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided that notice of such amendment is given in writing and is recorded by the secretary at least one week before the amendment is acted upon.





